



EVALUATING BUSINESS-EDUCATION COLLABORATION

Value Assessment Process

BY MICHAEL R. BLOOM

APRIL 1993

Highlights

- Organizations need concrete benefits from collaborative education activities.
- Value Assessment is a decision-making tool.
- Value Assessment is a technique for dialogue and discovery.

This summary and the report on *Evaluating Business-Education Collaboration: Value Assessment Process* have been funded, in part, through the Mobilization Component of the national Stay-in-School initiative, delivered under the auspices of the Minister of State for Youth by Employment and Immigration Canada.

SUMMARY

Introduction

The Value Assessment Process is a decision-making tool that helps organizations, and their partners, set organization-wide, local or program-specific objectives for involvement in education and assess and select programs to achieve those objectives. It can be used by businesses, education organizations, and others who are involved or who want to become involved in effective collaborative education activities that foster learning excellence.

Successful collaboration can make an important contribution to enhancing the quality of education in Canada. Value Assessment is designed to help organizations meet the challenge of ensuring that their collaborations are truly effective in improving young people's educational experiences. First developed by British Petroleum researchers,¹ the process has been modified, tested and validated in Canada under the general guidance of the Corporate Council on Education at meetings in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Calgary. These meetings were hosted by members of the Council's Models and Measurement Working Groups from September 1992 to March 1993.

Businesses can use Value Assessment to set organization-wide business objectives for their involvement in education and relate them to their overall corporate strategy. Education institutions can use Value Assessment to set organization-wide education objectives for their collaborative

involvement with business, and relate them to their overall organizational strategy.

Business and education objectives can also be set at the local or program-specific level. They should be consistent with organization-wide objectives, though they may differ in scale and scope. The process is designed to help both groups develop common or corresponding objectives, making it easier to align efforts to achieve positive results.

Once objectives have been set, Value Assessment can help organizations assess how well specific programs achieve their objectives, and choose which ones they should get involved in or maintain. It stimulates partners and prospective partners to question what they really want to achieve, to clarify their priorities, and to identify how all partners can benefit.

Implementing Value Assessment

Each organization can concentrate on the whole or part of Value Assessment most appropriate to its circumstances and implement the process to suit its own internal requirements. Value Assessment is best facilitated by a knowledgeable, neutral third-party facilitator who can manage the process and help the group make its own decisions.

Setting Objectives

Organizations can vary the process to suit their own and their partners' special needs, setting objectives that are clearly focused and measurable as outcomes.

¹ Alan Smithers and Chris Marsden, *Assessing the Value* (BP plc, and Alan Smithers, 1992), pp. 1, 7. The Value Assessment Process combines methods commonly used in business decision making with social science techniques based on value expectancy theory.

Benefits

- Improves objective setting
- Identifies effective programs
- Enhances decision making
- Encourages program replication
- Improves performance measurement
- Promotes true partnerships
- Increases internal support for education programs

Organizations look for partners who are interested in achieving common or corresponding objectives to ensure the alignment needed to achieve desired results. The decision about whether to be or to continue to be partners is a difficult one, but it is a key decision to make. Only by ensuring that the fit is right can organizations be sure that collaboration has a real chance of succeeding. Dialogue is important at every stage. It may be helpful to schedule regular, perhaps annual, discussions with partners followed by a reappraisal of objectives.

Assessing Programs

Like objective setting, program assessment starts with an open dialogue that helps participants identify the key questions they need to ask and answer in order to make valid assessments, including: What do we want to accomplish? What will we accept as a measure of accomplishment? What activities are we prepared to undertake? Do we have sufficient resources to act effectively? Initial assessment will establish a baseline against which subsequent performance can be tracked and outcomes measured.

A program’s value is assessed by rating how well it achieves each objective. The rating may be based on personal perception, on qualitative or quantitative measures, or some combination of the two. Current value is assessed twice: once to business and once to education. Scores are marked on the Value Assessment Map (see Chart 1). Program cost can also be indicated. The same process is followed to assess potential value. Decisions can be made about program support by examining the gap between current and potential value. The same process is also used to assess proposed programs and help determine whether a program under consideration, but not yet implemented, is likely to work.

Process Instructions

The instructions for implementing the Value Assessment Process are set out in Exhibit 1. Tables 1 to 6 and Chart 1 have been designed to assist organizations in setting objectives and methodically assessing the value of business–education collaborations.

Table 1			
Objectives			
Objective	Business rating	Education rating	Product (rating x rating)

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

Exhibit 1

Value Assessment Process

Instructions

Phase One: Setting and Ranking Objectives

Set and rank in order of importance organization-wide, local or program-specific objectives for collaborative education activity. Separate objectives for business and education are set and ranked. This may occur at the same or different times. Partners may or may not be involved. Objectives, although separate, may be identical.

Steps

1. Explanation

Facilitator explains the purpose and outlines the steps of the assessment process.

2. Breakout Groups

When business and education partners are present, separate into breakout groups, each with a facilitator. Business people develop business objectives for involvement in education. Educators develop education objectives for involvement with business. Each considers the importance of their objectives to both business and education.

Set and Rank Business Objectives

3. Discuss and Make List (or Breakout Group Lists)

Business participants discuss desired education outcomes and suggest business objectives. Facilitator records them on flip-charts. Reduce the number by combining them, as appropriate. If no breakout groups, move to step six.

4. Vote (Breakout Groups)

Each business participant votes for five business objectives, in no particular order. Facilitator collects the votes and lists the ten business objectives receiving the most votes. Facilitator reviews the list with business participants. End the breakout group session and reassemble whole meeting.

5. Make Combined List

Combine breakout groups' lists. Merge duplications. Place related objectives under major headings, as appropriate.

6. Vote and List

Each business participant votes for five business objectives, in no particular order. Facilitator collects the votes and lists the ten business objectives receiving the most votes. Facilitator reviews the list with business participants.

7. Rate and Multiply (use Table 1)

Each business participant rates the importance of the ten business objectives to business and education, giving each a maximum rating of ten and a minimum rating of one. More than one objective can have the *same* rating. Each business participant multiplies the ratings for each business objective, to obtain products.

Steps 8–9 Are Performed by the Facilitator

8. Total and Select (use Table 2)

Business participants tell the facilitator their products for each business objective. Facilitator totals all products for each business objective. Facilitator lists the business objectives in order, from highest to lowest total product. Select the top scoring business objectives on this list. Five or six business objectives are recommended.

9. Ranking Value (use Table 2)

Give the selected business objectives numerical ranking values. The top objective gets the highest ranking value, equal to the number of objectives. For example, when six objectives are selected, the highest ranking value is six. The second highest is five, the third highest is four, etc.

Set and Rank Education Objectives

Repeat Steps 3–9 (use Tables 1 and 2)

Corporate Council on Education

Core Purpose

We are a catalyst to engage business and education in partnerships that foster learning excellence to ensure Canada is competitive and successful in the global economy.

Member Organizations

AGT Limited
Air Canada
Atlantic Provinces
Telecommunications Council
Bank of Montreal
Bell Canada
Bell-Northern Research
British Columbia Telephone Company
CP Rail System
Canada Post Corporation
Canadian Microelectronics
Corporation
Canadian Occidental Petroleum Ltd.
General Electric Canada Inc.
IBM Canada Ltd.
IMASCO Limited
Imperial Oil Limited
Inco Limited
National Defence
Noranda Forest Inc.
Norcen Energy Resources Limited
Royal Bank of Canada
Shell Canada Limited
Syncrude Canada Ltd.
Talisman Energy Inc.
TransAlta Utilities Corporation
TransCanada PipeLines
Xerox Canada Ltd.

Exhibit 1 *cont'd*

Phase Two: Assessing Value of Programs

Assess current and potential value of the program to achieving objectives. Map program values on a two-dimensional Value Assessment Map. Examine the gap between the program's current and potential value.

Assess Current Value

Assess the program by rating its value to achieving each objective. Assess the program twice: once for its current value to business and once for its current value to education. Base ratings on rational perception, qualitative or quantitative measures, or some combination. Business people assess value to business; educators assess value to education.

Steps

1. Read and Discuss

Read summary of the program to be assessed, and other relevant documents. Discuss the program to clarify understanding of objectives, activities, resources committed and other relevant factors.

Steps 2–4 Are Performed by Participants

2. List Objectives by Ranking Value (use Table 3)

On Table 3, write the name of the program. List business objectives in order of ranking value, from highest to lowest. In left column, record ranking values, from highest to lowest. Using a duplicate of Table 3, list education objectives in order of ranking value, from highest to lowest. In left column, record ranking values, from highest to lowest.

3. Rate (use Table 3)

On Table 3, rate program's value to achieving each business objective. Give a maximum rating of five and a minimum rating of one. More than one objective can have the *same* rating. On the duplicate Table 3, rate the program's value to achieving each education objective. Give a maximum rating of five and a minimum rating of one.

4. Multiply and Add (use Table 3)

On Table 3, multiply ranking value and rating for each objective to obtain products. Add the products to reach raw business score for the program's value to business. On the duplicate Table 3, multiply ranking value and rating for each objective to obtain products. Add the products to reach raw education score for the program's value to education.

Steps 5–9 Are Performed by the Facilitator

5. Record (use Table 5)

From Table 3, record raw business scores on Table 5. From the duplicate Table 3, record raw education scores on a duplicate of Table 5.

6. Add and Divide (use Table 5)

On Table 5, add raw business scores to obtain total raw business score. Divide *total* raw business score by *number* of raw business scores to obtain *average* raw business score. On the duplicate Table 5, add raw education scores to obtain total raw education score. Divide *total* raw education score by *number* of raw education scores to obtain *average* raw education score.

7. Scale (use Tables 5 and 6)

On Table 5, scale the average raw business score. For example, with six objectives, deduct 21 from the average raw business score and divide by 28 to obtain the scaled business score (use Table 6). On the duplicate Table 5, scale the average raw education score.

8. Map (use Chart 1)

Map the scaled scores on the two-dimensional Value Assessment Map. Vertical dimension represents the program's score value to business. Horizontal dimension represents the program's score value to education. Mark scaled scores by a dot on the map where the scores intersect.

9. Cost (optional—use Chart 1)

Represent program cost by the size of the rectangle placed around the mapped dot. Rectangle's vertical side represents the cost to business; horizontal side represents the cost to education. Estimate the cost if necessary.

Assess Potential Value (or Value of Proposed Programs)

10. Repeat Steps 1–9 (use Table 4)

Use the same process to assess and map the potential value of programs. Rate potential value higher than current value when you identify specific changes that justify the increase.

11. Gap

Examine the gap between the location on the map of current and potential value of programs to help make decisions about future program support.

Use Value Assessment

- To set organization-wide, local or program-specific objectives
- To assess the current and potential value of partnerships and programs
- To identify key questions and data needed to make decisions about implementing, improving, or cancelling programs
- To establish a baseline for performance for purposes of analysis and comparison
- To reconsider objectives and reassess the value of partnerships and programs

Table 2

Objectives: Ranking Values

[illegible]

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

Table 3

Current Value

Program name:

Ranking value	Objective	Current rating	Product (ranking value x rating)
		Raw score (add products)	

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

Table 4

Potential Value

Program name:

Ranking value	Objective	Potential rating	Product (ranking value x rating)
		Raw score (add products)	

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

- Organizations can periodically use Value Assessment to reconsider objectives and reassess programs.
- Value Assessment can be supplemented by measurements of program outcomes.
- Organizations can identify model programs by undertaking assessments of programs run by other organizations.
- Individual champions can promote the use of Value Assessment within their organizations and train colleagues and partners to use it.

For copies of the report and further information, contact the National Business and Education Centre, The Conference Board of Canada.

Également disponible en français



**The Conference Board
of Canada**
255 Smyth Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 8M7
Canada
Tel: (613) 526-3280
Fax: (613) 526-4857

"Information for Sound Decisions"

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

Sources: British Petroleum plc, 1992; The Conference Board of Canada, 1993.